

## The Race

"Quit! Give up! You're beaten!"  
They shout out and plead.  
"There's just too much against you now.  
This time you can't succeed!"

And as I start to hang my head  
In front of failure's face,  
My downward fall is broken by  
The memory of a race.

And hope refills my weakened will  
As I recall that scene;  
For just the thought of that short race  
Rejuvenates my being.

A children's race- young boys, young men;  
How I remember well.  
Excitement, sure, but also fear;  
It wasn't hard to tell.

They all lined up so full of hope:  
Each thought to win that race.  
Or tie for first, or if not that,  
At least take second place.

And fathers watched from off the side,  
Each cheering for his son.  
And each boy hoped to show his dad  
That he would be the one.

The whistle blew and off they went!  
Young hearts and hopes afire.  
To win, to be the hero there  
Was each young boy's desire.

And one boy in particular  
Whose dad was in the crowd,  
Was running near the lead and thought,  
"My dad will be so proud."

But as he speeded down the field,  
Across a shallow dip,  
The little boy who thought to win,  
Lost his step and slipped.

Trying hard to catch himself  
His hands flew out to brace,  
And mid the laughter of the crowd  
He fell flat on his face.

So down he fell and with him hope  
He couldn't win it now-  
Embarrassed, sad, he only wished  
To disappear somehow.

But as he fell his dad stood up  
And showed his anxious face,  
Which to the boy so clearly said:  
"Get up and win the race!"

He quickly rose, no damage done  
Behind a bit, that's all-  
And ran with all his mind and might  
To make up for his fall.

So anxious to restore himself  
To catch up and to win  
His mind went faster than his legs;  
He slipped and fell again!

He wished that he had quit before  
With only one disgrace.  
"I'm hopeless as a runner now;  
I shouldn't try to race."

So he jumped up to try again.  
Ten yards behind the last-  
"If I'm to gain those yards," he thought,  
"I've got to move real fast."

Exerting everything he had,  
He gained eight or ten,  
But trying so hard to catch the lead  
He slipped and fell again!

Defeat! He lay there silently  
A tear dropped from his eye-  
"There's no sense running anymore:  
Three strikes I'm out, why try?"

The will to rise had disappeared  
All hope had fled away;  
So far behind, so error-prone:  
A loser all the way.

"I've lost, so what's the use," he thought.  
"I'll live with my disgrace."  
But then he thought about his dad  
Who soon he'd have to face.

"Get up," an echo sounded low,  
"Get up and take your place.  
You were not meant for failure here.  
Get up and win the race."

With borrowed will, "Get up," it said,  
"You haven't lost at all,  
For winning is not more than this:  
To rise each time you fall."

So up he rose to win once more,  
And with a new commit  
He resolved that win or lose,  
At least he wouldn't quit.

So far behind the others now.  
The most he'd ever been-  
Still he gave it all he had  
And ran as though to win.

Three times he'd fallen stumbling:  
Three times he'd rose again.  
Too far behind to win  
He still ran to the end.

They cheered the winning runner  
As he crossed first place,  
Head high and proud and happy;  
No falling, no disgrace.

But when the fallen youngster  
Crossed the line, last place,  
The crowd gave him the greater cheer  
For finishing the race.

And even though he came in last  
With head bowed low, unproud,  
You would have thought he won the  
Race to listen to the crowd.

And to his dad he sadly said,  
"I didn't do so well."  
"To me you won," his father said.  
"You rose each time you fell."

And when things seem dark and hard  
And difficult to face,  
The memory of that little boy  
Helps me in my race.

For all of life is like that race.  
With ups and downs and all.  
And all you have to do to win  
Is rise each time you fall.

"Quit!" "Give up, you're beaten!"  
They still shout in my face.  
But another voice within me says:

"GET UP AND WIN THE RACE!"

Author Unknown